

Fifth Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

**This is a call for applications for STSM in the framework of the
COST Action SAGA (CA17131), Grant Period 3:**

- **Open call: 21 April 2021**
- **The call will remain open until 01 October 2021**
- **Proposals will be then evaluated on a first-come-first-serve basis**
- **All missions must comply with any current movement restrictions, and with a written acknowledgement from the researchers and hosts that they undertake the travel at their own risk (including potentially being quarantined on their way home) and costs (if awardees get stranded abroad/experience travel delays beyond the STSM period)**
- **Missions should be completed by 01 October 2021**
- The report must be sent to the STSM Coordinator within 30 days of the completion of the STSM
- Please note that interested applicants should familiarise themselves with the COST Action SAGA aim and objectives (described in the proposal published here: <https://riojournal.com/article/31648/>) and read Section 8 from the COST Vademecum (<https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Vademecum-May-2019.pdf>) to establish whether they are eligible to apply for an STSM.

What is an STSM?

An STSM facilitates Researchers from COST Countries participating in COST Action SAGA to go to an institution, organisation or research centre in another participating COST

Who can apply?

Participation of “Early Career Investigators” (ECI) in STSM is particularly encouraged. An applicant can be considered as being an ECI when the time that has elapsed between the award date of the applicant’s PhD and the date of the applicant’s first involvement in the COST Action SAGA does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to partake in STSM.

The STSM must specifically contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of COST Action SAGA. For this Grant Period (GP) 2, STSM aiming to address the specific objectives and tasks of Working Group (WG) 1, WG 2 and WG 3, detailed in SAGA’s proposal (link at the end of the document) will be prioritised.

How much?

An STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application.

STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission. A STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee. The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:

1. Up to a maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to each successful applicant
2. Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.
3. Up to a maximum of EUR 300 can be afforded for travel costs.

Specific provisions have been introduced to enable researchers from ITC participating in SAGA to request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM

How to apply?

Interested researchers must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 8 of the COST Vademecum (link at the end of the document).

Applicants can apply by following the directions below. In addition, they are welcome to request more information or clarification on this procedure to

our STSM Coordinator Dr Elina Aidona (email: aidona@geo.auth.gr).

Instructions for submitting the online application

Firstly, all applicants must register for an e-COST profile (link at the end of the document). Applications for STSM are managed through the e-COST

management tool. The link to the online STSM application is available at the end of the document.

In order to do access to the online STSM application, you need first to log in using your e-COST profile.

The application for a STSM is composed of two parts:

1. Online registration by the applicant.

The Applicant must use the online e-COST tool to register the request for an STSM. The following information has to be encoded with the registration:

- Title of the planned STSM
- Planned dates and length of stay
- Motivation statement & description of the proposed work plan (2000 words maximum; see details below)
- Name, address & email of the prospective host at the receiving institute
- Budget request with a breakdown of the costs of the STSM

2. Supporting documents. The supporting documents necessary for an STSM application include the following:

- Support letter from the Home Institution
- Written agreement from the Host institution that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates
- Full CV of the applicant (including a list of academic publications, if applicable)

After submitting the application, the online registration tool will issue a formal STSM application which will be automatically sent to the STSM Coordinator.

Instructions for writing the Motivation Statement and Work Plan

The maximum length of the STSM motivation and work plan summary is 2000 words. It is part of the online application form. A complete proposal should include the following sections:

1. Aim and motivation: Explain the purpose of the STSM and what scientific and/or other outcomes you aim to accomplish with the STSM. State which WG covers the aims of the STSM best. **Very importantly, explain how the STSM aims and outcomes relate to the specific scientific objectives of SAGA and specific WGs objectives/tasks** (these are detailed in SAGA's proposal and the link to the proposal can be found at the end of the document). Explain your choice for the Host institution (including a description of the Host Laboratory's expertise and link to their website, max 200 words).
2. Methods: Detail what methods /techniques you may learn to use, if applicable.
3. Work plan: Detail the steps you will take to achieve your proposed aims.
4. Expected output of the STSM: foreseen publications, future collaboration, etc.

Selection of applicants

The applications will be pre-processed by the STSM Coordinator who will then distribute a list of applications (containing an in- formative summary as well as the

names of the Home and Host institutions) to be ranked by the STSM Selection Committee (i.e. SAGA's Core Group: Chair and Vice- chair,

WG leaders, STSM Coordinator and other SAGA coordinators.

To guarantee a fair and objective evaluation, evaluators should not hold an affiliation with neither the Home nor the Host institution of the STSM proposal in question. All applications will be evaluated, at least, by two members of the Core Group each.

Evaluation will be based on the scientific excellence of the applicant, the research proposal, and the relevance of the work plan for the achievement of COST Action SAGA objectives.

There should be special considerations with respect to supporting COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Early Career Investigators (ECI) and broadening geographical inclusiveness.

Successful applicants will receive a Grant letter/email confirmation from the Grant Holder, stating the official approval of the STSM application and the granted budget. The applicant has to notify acceptance of the Grant to the Grant Holder via email (SAGA's Chair & STSM Coordinator should be cc'd).

After the STSM

The grantee is required to upload into e-COST a scientific report and Host approval of the report within 30 days after the end date of the STSM*. The scientific report will require the approval of the Core Group in order to effect the payment of the Grant.

The submission of the supporting documents is mandatory or the Grant is cancelled. Late submission beyond the deadline can also lead to the cancellation of the Grant.

Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants.

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a brief summary of the STSM outputs for the Action's website describing the scientific report which will also be made available online.

**NOTE: For STSM ending close to the end of the Grant Period 3, the completion report must be returned by October 15 2021, so that the reimbursement procedure can be completed within the budget period.*

Acknowledgement of COST Action SAGA

If work resulting from an STSM visit is published in a journal, please add the following acknowledgement:

"This work/Part of this work was supported by the COST Action SAGA - The Soil Science & Archaeo-Geophysics Alliance, CA17131,

www.saga-cost.eu."

If the work is presented in a conference or other event, the oral or poster paper must clearly display the:

- **SAGA logo**
- **SAGA's website:**
<http://www.saga-cost.eu>
- **COST Association and EU logos**

Please contact SAGA's Science Communication Manager (Dr Agnese Kukela): agnese.kukela@gmail.com for more information and high resolution logo files.

Links to key webpages and documents

- SAGA's website:
<https://www.saga-cost.eu>
- COST Action SAGA proposal:
<https://riojournal.com/article/31648>
- SAGA's admin site in COST Association website:
<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17131/#tabs|Name:overview>
- MoU (COST Action SAGA):
<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17131/#tabs|Name:overview>
- COST Vademecum, see Section 8, "Short Term Scientific Missions": <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Vademecum-May-2019.pdf>
- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) User Guide:
<https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/STSM-userguide-for-website-Oct-2018.pdf>
- Create an e-COST profile:
<https://e-services.cost.eu>
- Online application form:
<https://e-services.cost.eu/STSM>
(this requires of an e-COST profile)

For further information please contact the STSM
Coordinator:
Dr Elina Aidona
(aidona@geo.auth.gr)



SAGA

The Soil Science & Archaeo-Geophysics Alliance

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